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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S OPPOSITION CHP DEVELOPS "NUANCES" ON EU
POLICY IN WAKE OF MAY 28 NSC MEETING

REF: A. ANKARA 3509

[1](#)B. ANKARA 3618

(U) Classified by Acting Political Counselor Nicholas S.
Kass. Reason: 1.5 (b)(d).

[1](#)1. (C) Ref A noted main opposition CHP's general support for the AK government's sixth EU reform package, which could be brought to Parliament perhaps as early as this week. However, in light of the May 28 NSC meeting and the well-publicized opposition to the reform process among hardliners in the military leadership (ref B), there are signs that CHP is beginning to shift its stance on AK EU-related efforts.

[1](#)2. (C) Several CHP M.P.s -- including Bulent Tanla and Foreign Affairs Committee member Hasim Oral -- have asserted to us privately that the party will continue to support the government's effort "fully and unconditionally." Nevertheless, other, senior CHP M.P.s -- Deputy Group Chairman Haluk Koc and Central Administrative Board member Fuat Cay -- offered to us June 9 a more nuanced version of the party's approach on the issues.

[1](#)3. (C) While professing CHP's commitment to the EU, Koc and Cay listed their objections to the current reform package:

-- Both claimed that allowing foreign observers to monitor Turkish elections, as currently envisioned in the AK government's draft, is unacceptable. Turkey already allows OSCE observers, they argued. "We are not Armenia or Azerbaijan," said Koc. "We aren't a third world democracy, are we?"

-- Koc noted that CHP does not want state-owned TRT television to be involved in any way in Kurdish broadcasting -- another key, and controversial, provision in the AK government's plan. Koc worried that "if Kurdish is allowed to run on TRT, then legally State television will have to give voice to all Turkish minorities," even the Circassians, (who have long been integrated into the "Turkish" ethnic body politic).

-- Cay strongly objected to the inclusion of a measure that would allow the establishment of places of worship in apartment buildings. "This has nothing to do with the EU. We already have more mosques -- 80,000 -- than schools -- 60,000."

-- While both endorsed AK's efforts to abolish article 8 of the anti-terror law, Cay volunteered that "other mechanisms exist, like article 312 of the penal code" (note: under which PM Erdogan was jailed in 1999. End note) to protect the interests and equities of the Turkish State.

COMMENT

[1](#)4. (C) June 9 mainstream press reports indicate that AK is shelving the provision on places of worship. Nevertheless, this is precisely the kind of issue that routinely raises the hackles of -- and provides ammunition to -- the "Party of Ataturk" and the Kemalist secularist elites, whom CHP represents. The party's subtle shift almost certainly reflects attempts by Chairman Baykal -- known for aggressive tactics of limited effectiveness -- to curry favor both with the voters and military hard-liners. The comments of Cay and Koc, particularly with respect to Article 8 issues, appear to reflect such considerations. CHP's tactics could complicate the reform package's prospects -- particularly if AK bucks

long-held Turkish State shibboleths and submits the package to Parliament as promised before the NSC's meeting at the end of June.

PEARSON